

# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 16 December 1993



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Statistics

## Employment growth continues

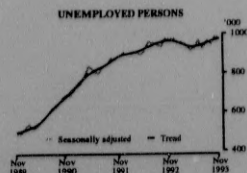
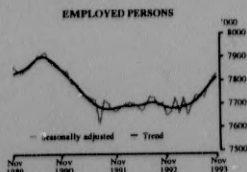
The provisional trend estimate of total employment increased in November 1993, continuing the succession of rises since February 1993. The trend in full-time employment has been increasing generally since October 1992 while the trend in part-time employment has increased in each of the last seven months. Provisional trend estimates of unemployment increased for the sixth successive month, after falling between December 1992 and May 1993. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate was 11.1 per cent, unchanged from October 1993. The overall trend participation rate increased to 63.1 per cent, and the rate for females reached 52.5 per cent — the highest recorded by the survey.

### Employment

The November 1993 seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons was 7 829 500, an increase of 22 500 since October 1993. Full-time employment increased by 16 300 to 5 980 700, mainly due to an increase of 28 500 in the number of males employed full time, which now stands at 4 066 600. Female full-time employment fell by 12 200 to 1 914 100. Part-time employment rose to 1 848 800, with an increase of 11 500 in the number of females employed part time outweighing a small decline in the number of males employed part time.

### Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons in November 1993 was 978 400, a small fall since October 1993. The number of persons seeking full-time work decreased by 11 700 to 810 100, mainly due to a fall of 13 700 in the number of males seeking full-time work. The number of unemployed persons looking for part-time work increased by 8 100 to 168 300 with a small increase in the number of both males and females seeking part-time work.



LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES  
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Un- employment rate — per cent —	Partici- pation rate	
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
	— '000 —					
1993						
June	5 955.2	1 780.8	7 736.0	966.4	11.1	62.8
July	5 917.8	1 817.3	7 735.1	924.3	10.7	62.4
August	5 908.9	1 820.7	7 729.6	963.5	11.1	62.6
September	5 916.8	1 857.9	7 774.7	947.2	10.9	62.7
October	5 964.4	1 842.6	7 807.0	982.0	11.2	63.1
November	5 980.7	1 848.8	7 829.5	978.4	11.1	63.2

### Unemployment rate

In November 1993, the seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate was 11.1 per cent, compared with 11.2 per cent in October 1993. For males, the unemployment rate fell by 0.3 percentage points to 11.3 per cent, while for females, the rate increased by 0.2 percentage points to 10.9 per cent.

Continued ...

## Participation rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate in November 1993 was 63.2 per cent, an increase of 0.1 percentage points since October 1993. The participation rate increased slightly for both males and females to 74.1 per cent and 52.6 per cent respectively.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0), or contact Heather Crawford on (06) 252 6525.

## New study provides major update on wholesale industry

The release of the publication *Wholesale Industry, Australia, 1991-92* (8638.0) has provided the first comprehensive coverage of the wholesale industry in ten years.

A sample of the summary information included in the publication follows.

During 1991-92, there were 29 967 businesses operating in the wholesale industry in Australia, representing an increase of around 4 per cent over 1981-82.

These businesses employed 350 401 persons (down 5% on 1981-82) and generated a turnover of \$141 951 million, an increase of 19 per cent over 1981-82 in constant price terms.

Small businesses (less than 20 employees) made up 90 per cent of the wholesale businesses, but accounted for only 38 per cent of employment in the industry. The comparable percentages ten years earlier were 91 per cent and 34 per cent.

The operating profit before tax for the wholesale industry in 1991-92 was \$2 825 million, which represented an operating profit margin of 2 per cent. Across wholesale industries, the operating profit margin varied from 4.7 per cent in the 'other' wholesaling industry, to a low of 0.5 per cent in the 'machinery and equipment' wholesaling industry.

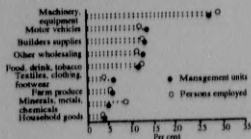
In terms of turnover, petroleum products wholesalers were the largest individual industry class, with turnover of \$20 365 million.

The 'machinery and equipment' wholesaling industry employed the highest number of persons (102 677), with the next highest being 'builders' supplies' at 44 155. The 'household goods' wholesaling industry reported the lowest number of persons employed at 12 977.

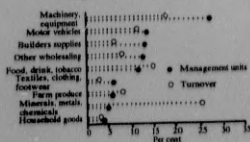
Computer wholesaling was not included as a separate industry class in the 1981-82 survey, therefore no accurate comparisons are available. It is clear, however, that the computer industry made a significant contribution to wholesaling in 1991-92. It employed 22 619 people, turned over \$7 419 million and yielded industry gross product of \$1 110 million.

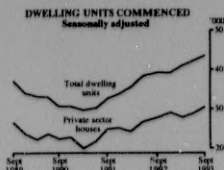
For further information, order the publication *Wholesale Industry, Australia* (8638.0), or contact Graham Boxsell on (06) 252 6993.

WHOLESALE INDUSTRY, 1991-92  
Management units and persons employed



WHOLESALE INDUSTRY, 1991-92  
Management units and turnover





## Housing starts highest since 1989

The preliminary seasonally adjusted estimate of the number of dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1993 was 43 543. This was an increase of 3.1 per cent over the June quarter 1993 estimate, and the highest quarterly commencement figure since the March quarter 1989.

With the exception of a very small decrease in the December quarter 1992, dwelling unit commencements have increased consistently since the March quarter 1991 and are now almost 50 per cent above the level recorded at that time. Private sector house commencements rose by 5.3 per cent to 30 448 in the September quarter 1993, the highest quarterly commencement figure since the June quarter 1989.

The increase in dwelling unit commencements was strongest in Tasmania (14.7%) and Western Australia (6.6%), both States rebounding from significant falls in the previous quarter, with rises also in Victoria (2.9%) and Queensland (0.7%). These rises more than offset falls in commencements in the Australian Capital Territory (down 12.9%), South Australia (down 8.9%) and New South Wales (down 1.3%).

In original terms, there were 45 063 dwelling units commenced in the September quarter 1993, an increase of 5.8 per cent over the June quarter estimate of 42 598. Total private sector commencements rose by 6.0 per cent (house commencements up 6.6% and other residential building commencements up 4.2%). Total public sector commencements rose by 2.9 per cent (a 29.4% increase in other residential building commencements more than offset a 29.3% fall in house commencements).

Total dwelling unit commencements in the September quarter 1993 were up by 10.9 per cent over the same period in 1992. Commencements of other residential dwellings increased by 13.4 per cent, while house commencements rose by 9.9 per cent.

DWELLING UNIT COMMENCEMENTS, SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1993

	Number	Percentage change	
		From previous quarter	From corresponding quarter of previous year
Private sector houses			
Seasonally adjusted	30 448	5.3	9.4
Original	31 238	6.6	9.3
Total dwelling units			
Seasonally adjusted	43 543	3.1	10.9
Original	43 063	5.8	10.9

For further information, order the publication *Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, Preliminary (8750.0)*, or contact Paul Seville on (06) 252 6067.

## Divorces: numbers up, rates down

There were 45 665 divorces granted in Australia in 1992. This is the highest number granted since the record numbers of 1976 (63 230), the year the Family Law Act became operational, reflecting increases in the married population.

The number of divorces granted per 1 000 married population has fallen for both males and females from 12.5 per 1 000 married population in 1982 to 11.5 per 1 000 married population in 1992. This rate had previously fallen below 11 per 1 000 in the mid-1980s.

In 1992 there were 45 704 children aged under 18 years who were dependants of persons divorcing, compared with 53 010 in 1982. The proportion of divorces granted where there were dependant children declined from 62 per cent in 1982 to 53 per cent in 1992.

The number of divorces granted on applications lodged jointly by both husband and wife continues to increase. In 1984 (the earliest year comparative details are available) joint applications represented 0.4 per cent of all divorces granted. However, by 1992 this percentage had increased to 15.7 per cent.

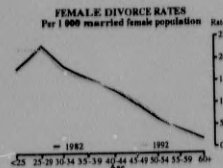
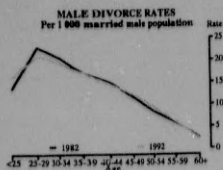
The median age at divorce has been consistently increasing for both males and females over the last ten years. In 1982 the median age at divorce was 35.8 years for males and 33.2 years for females. By 1992 these medians had increased to 38.7 years and 35.9 years respectively.

The age specific divorce rates relate to the number of divorces granted by age of divorcing parties per 1 000 married population in a specific age. Between 1982 and 1992 the largest increase, for both males and females, was in the under 25 years age group. For males the rate increased 20 per cent while for females the rate increased 26 per cent.

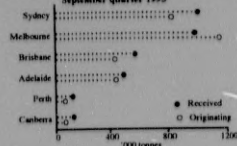
In 1992 the median duration of marriage to the time of separation was 7.4 years.

**DIVORCES, 1992**  
Median duration of marriage to divorce

Marital status at date of marriage	Husband	Wife
Never married	11.4	11.3
Widowed	7.0	8.0
Divorced	7.9	7.9
Total	10.5	10.5



INTERSTATE ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENT  
September quarter 1993



## Interstate road freight rises

Total interstate road freight moved by major operators during the September quarter 1993 (4 458 000 tonnes) was 1.4 per cent higher than in the June quarter 1993 (4 395 000 tonnes). This increase, though smaller than those in recent years, is in line with experience from 1989, where the September quarter figures typically have been higher than those reported in the immediately preceding June quarter.

A large number of enterprises indicated that seasonal factors affected their volume of freight moved. A number of enterprises also reported that increasing economic activity was a major factor resulting in higher tonnages of freight moved this quarter.

INTERSTATE ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENT FOR SELECTED MAJOR CENTRES,  
SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1993

	Road freight originating		Road freight received	
	'000 tonnes	Percentage change on previous qtr	'000 tonnes	Percentage change on previous qtr
Sydney	835	-5.8	1 004	2.4
Melbourne	1 151	2.9	985	-2.5
Geelong	30	-8.0	77	14.9
Brisbane	441	3.6	581	-1.3
Adelaide	446	-1.9	498	0.8
Perth	71	-4.5	128	7.4
Tasmania	2	-15.4	7	-34.2
Darwin	8	-25.8	39	-7.2
Canberra	75	71.4	133	0.2
Total	4 458	1.4	4 458	1.4

For further information, order the publication *Interstate Road Freight Movement, Australia* (9214.0), or contact Choon Looi on (06) 252 5458.

## In brief ...

### ☐ Personal finance

The provisional trend estimate for personal finance commitments for October 1993 was \$1 959.8 million, an increase of \$57.9 million (3.0%) on September 1993 and an increase of \$238.3 million (13.8%) on October 1992.

The trend estimates for fixed loan facilities increased by \$30.6 million (2.6%) and commitments under revolving credit facilities increased by \$27.3 million (3.8%) on September 1993.

### ☐ Commercial finance

The provisional trend estimate for commercial finance commitments for October 1993 was \$7 080.3 million, a decrease of \$68.8 million (1.0%) on September 1993 and down \$61.5 million (0.9%) on October 1992.

*Continued ...*

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

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**Statistics Weekly**  
**16 December 1993**

The October 1993 trend estimate for commitments under fixed loan facilities fell by \$23.7 million (0.7%). The trend estimate for commitments under revolving credit facilities decreased by \$45.1 million (1.1%).

#### □ Lease finance

The provisional trend estimate for lease finance commitments for October 1993 was \$471.0 million, an increase of \$6.0 million (1.3%) on September 1993 and up \$70.3 million (17.6%) on October 1992.

*These series are available on subscription to a special data service. For further information, contact Mark Dennis on (06) 252 7117.*

#### □ Agriculture

Between 1991-92 and 1992-93 preliminary estimates of the total gross value of agricultural commodities produced rose by 5.3 per cent to \$21 959.9 million. The major contributor to this rise was the increase in the value of wheat which increased by 27.9 per cent to \$2 682.6 million. Although the average price per tonne of wheat fell by 11.6 per cent, production increased by 44.8 per cent.

Total gross value of livestock slaughterings and other disposals rose by 5.9 per cent (\$336.5 million) to \$6 074.7 million. The largest rise occurred in the gross value of sheep and lamb slaughterings, which increased by 46.5 per cent to \$674.6 million due to an average increase of 49.4 per cent in the unit price received per animal. Gross value of wool fell by \$304.5 million to \$2 675.0 million. This represented a fall of 54.7 per cent compared with 1988-89. This fall caused the total value of livestock products to decrease marginally, even after taking into account a significant increase in the value of total wholemilk production. The increase of 14.0 per cent was mainly due to a 21.1 per cent increase in the value of milk for manufacturing.

*Source: Value of Selected Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 1992-93, Preliminary (7502.0).*

## Order from the following:

### Expected releases over the fortnight to 28 December

- 16 Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, October 1993 (\$609.0; \$10.70)
- 17 Export Price Index, Australia, October 1993 (6405.0; \$8.20)  
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, October 1993 (6412.0; \$10.70)
- 21 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, October 1993 (6411.0; \$10.70)  
Import Price Index, Australia, October 1993 (6414.0; \$8.20)
- 22 Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, November 1993, Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.70)
- 23 Manufacturing Production, Australia, November 1993, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.70)



Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National accounts</b>						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	n.a.	96 123	0.3	3.2
<b>International accounts</b>						
Balance on current account (b)	October 93	\$m	-1 184	-1 257	-17	4
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	203	158	44	98
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	20	-1	90	99
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 765	5 475	-3	8
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 562	-5 317	-4	7
Net foreign debt	September qtr 93	\$m	177 805	n.a.	3.5	8.1
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	239 057	n.a.	6.6	14.6
<b>Consumption and investment</b>						
Retail turnover at current prices	October 93	\$m	8 367	8 294	0.8	3.2
New capital expenditure at current prices	September qtr 93	"	6 328	6 455	2.3	6.2
New motor vehicle registrations	October 93	no.	44 699	45 761	15.5	4.2
<b>Production</b>						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	36 435	35 751	1.6	8.3
Dwelling unit approvals	October 93	no.	14 622	14 915	0.2	6.7
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 021	1 971	-17.5	-0.7
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 93	"	6 023	6 044	-3.1	2.2
<b>Prices</b>						
Consumer price index	September qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	109.8	n.a.	0.5	2.2
Articles produced by manufacturing industry (d)	September 93	1988-89 = 100.0	116.0	n.a.	0.5	1.8
Materials used in manufacturing industries	September '92	1984-85 = 100.0	128.1	n.a.	0.8	0.9
<b>Labour force and demography</b>						
Employed persons	November 93	'000	7 833.1	7 829.5	0.3	2.3
Participation rate †	"	%	62.7	63.2	0.1	0.6
Unemployment rate †	"	%	10.3	11.1	-0.1	-0.2
Job vacancies	August qtr 93	'000	39.0	37.3	18.0	38.9
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.15	1.19	-0.5	8.3
Estimated resident population	March qtr 93	million	17.6	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	September 93	'000	224	260	0.9	18.3
<b>Incomes</b>						
Company profits before income tax	September qtr 93	\$m	5 283	5 073	10.6	21.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults, ordinary time	August qtr 93	\$	602.40	n.a.	0.8	2.8
<b>Financial markets</b>						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	October 93	% per annum	4.80	n.a.	-0.05	-1.05
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	6.50	n.a.	-0.35	-2.35
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	"	per \$A	0.6603	n.a.	1	-8

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 16 December 1993.  
NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

## Key State indicators

	Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	June qtr 93	-8.8	12.1	4.4	-3.6	32.2	13.1	n.a.	n.a.	6.1
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	October 93	0.5	4.9	3.8	6.4	10.2	3.5	n.a.	n.a.	5.6
New motor vehicle registrations†	October 93	5.6	-3.5	20.8	-8.7	1.0	-7.9	-10.1	21.6	4.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	October 93	-2.3	7.4	12.5	-11.0	5.3	-0.6	2.4	-2.1	6.7
Value of total building work done	June qtr 93	-5.0	-6.1	18.6	13.0	31.3	-17.3	-6.7	-11.2	2.8
Employed persons†	November 93	3.4	0.7	2.5	0.5	4.9	-0.3	-1.2	2.5	2.3
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 93	1.8	1.8	2.5	2.7	1.1	2.2	1.5	2.2	1.9
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	August qtr 93	3.0	2.1	5.2	3.6	-0.1	2.7	2.6	3.4	2.8
Population	June qtr 93	0.8	0.3	2.7	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.7	1.6	1.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	June qtr 93	4.6	3.6	12.2	-0.6	8.3	6.0	13.3	-7.1	6.4

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

